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AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

BY HESTER M. POOLE.

FIRST PAPER.

THE meagerness of associations connected with our public places is often deplored by our own writers, and used as a covert sneer by foreigners. As it is a fault which Time only can correct, we must be content to leave it for that person himself to weave the intangible yet effective drapery which throws a spell over the most commonplace or dreary spot.

These thoughts pass before the inner vision as we approach the Executive Mansion. There it stands, overlooking the Potomac and the Monument, as it has stood since it was rebuilt after being destroyed by the British in 1814, a plain structure, 170 feet long by 86 feet wide, and two stories in height. On entering under the grand portico, supported on eight Ionic columns, we find ourselves in a vestibule 40 feet deep by 50 feet wide. It is frescoed overhead, the medallions on either side of the central chandelier of crystal having been painted on canvas by Brumidi. The side walls are similarly decorated. During the Presidency of Mr. Hayes, the oak floor was replaced with tiling. A sash screen, finished at the top with open Moorish arches, separates this entrance-hall from a corridor eighteen feet wide, running lengthwise of the building, from the East room to the conservatory on the west. These sashes are filled with colored glass, in large mosaics, by Tiffany, giving an indescribably rich effect under gaslight. A small door in the right wall of the vestibule opens into the waiting-room; that on the right upon a passage running north and south, on the right of which is a staircase leading to the Cabinet room, the President's offices, and the secretary's rooms, on the floor above.

At the left of this passage is situated the door leading into the East Room, through which visitors enter. This apartment occupies the entire left wing of the Mansion, having four windows in front, four in the rear, and one large window with narrow ones on either side, in the middle of the eastern wall.

The proportions of the East Room are agreeable, it being 80 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 22 feet high. The ceiling is divided by two heavy cross-beams in such a manner as to make the center compartment a third smaller than those at either end. The ceiling itself is in imitation of rough stucco, painted, and then finished in silver aluminum, and finally in mosaic work of three shades of brown. In each section there is a border of squares covered alternately with arabesques and mosaic. Each center-piece is one large square, with narrow side parallelograms and corner squares.

The cross-beams are supported, on either end, by an Ionic pilaster and one pillar, with bases the height of the dado, and fluted capitals. They are also in white and gold. The four large mantels in white and gold, two on either side of the room, are finished in squares, matching frieze and dado, and bear each an immense plate-glass mirror. These are framed to correspond with the rest of the wood-work. The nearest one is not indicated in the picture, which is taken from the entrance described as leading from the passage at the left of the vestibule. The portrait of Martha Washington, at the extreme left, is copied from the original at Mount Vernon, and the dress patterned from one worn at a "Martha Washington tea-party" in Paris, some years since, and was painted by A. F. Anderson, in 1878. Owing to the inflexibility of the camera, the mantel immediately adjoining that could not be represented. Neither could the picture of George Washington, by Gilbert Stuart, on the south side of the large east window.

The three chandeliers, each with three tiers of burners, which are such conspicuous features of the room, contain each 4,300 pieces, and produce, when lighted, a magnificent effect.

The cornice consists of one large cove, with two members on either side. The molded frieze, two feet deep, together with cornice and cove, are finished in white and gold, which predominates in the decorations. The cross-beams are treated as a part of the cornice. Allowing the eye to pass downward to the dado of paneled wood, three feet and a half high, we find the same elaborate treatment of the two leading tints.

The walls are covered with thick flock paper, painted a light steel-gray, with raised stencillings tipped with gold. This pattern measures four inches across, and consists of four leaves, joining squarely at their bases. The wall-paper is finished at the bottom with a dado of the same, painted six shades darker, outlined and paneled in gilt. It is fifteen inches wide.

The furniture, square and massive, as becomes

such an apartment, has coverings of deep golden-brown on frames of ebony. The material of a portion is plush, the remainder of brocaded satin. Two breadths of this latter fabric cover each of the nine long windows, and are edged with narrow fringe. They are hung on immense poles, grooved, painted white and gilded, with rings covered with gilded knobs. Straight lambrequins, 27 inches deep, hang with the curtains; the fabric, a deep-brown plush, embroidered in dark colors, and finished with heavy fringe. The breadths of the large east window do not meet; they are looped the height of the dado over curtains of lace.

The Axminster carpet contains a variety of dull, pale tints, in which amber predominates. The other colors are olive, pale crimson, and dull blue. These seem to coil themselves up and sleep by day; they fade out and are lifeless; but when the chandeliers are lighted, they start into life, and lend their soft shades of yellow and brown to the rich harmonies which play upon the delighted eye like cheerful music upon the ear. Indeed, the room cannot be fitly seen except under such circumstances. It is emphatically fitted for evening receptions or dinners. On these occasions the mantels are banked with brilliant flowers from the conservatory, the large east window massed with tropical plants, pots of flowers fill in the window-spaces, and the chandeliers are draped with smilax.

At the middle of the west wall of the East Room, on the extreme right of the illustration, large doors open into the long corridor, flanked by pilasters and pillars like those of the east window. Still farther along, to the right of the same wall, another door leads into the parlor known as the Green Room, which is 20 feet wide and 30 deep from north to south. The furniture and hangings of this drawing-room exhibit a refined taste, which is restful to the eye that may be wearied with the glitter of more gorgeous decorations.

The woodwork is white, except the doors, which, like all the others on the first floor, are of inlaid mahogany. The fireplace casing, mantel and hearth are white marble, with fittings of brass, and above is a large mirror, framed in gilt. Two windows reach to the paneled woodwork, three feet and a half from the floor; the space between them is filled by a mirror resting on a narrow and high gilt pier of marble, with carved and gilded frame. The walls, hung with Nile green and gilt flowered paper, have no dado, the paper reaching to the skirting board. The frieze is dark, dull green, flecked with metallic tints, edged with gilt moldings; altogether, 27 inches deep. The cornice is a dull, greenish gray, the two members banded with gilt. The ceiling is frescoed in the style of Louis XVI.; griffins and birds of paradise on a ground of light gray-green, with medallions in the border.

The Axminster carpet of yellow-green, with small, dark multi-colored figures, is bordered with dark green "filling," and before the hearth is spread a large dark green Turkish rug. The furniture frames are ebony; the picture frames and mirror frames are gilded. The furniture covering of silk reps or satin is untufted; the tint of that soft, neutral Nile green so agreeable to the eye that is weary of brighter coloring. Satin curtains of the same tint hang from large gilt poles with ball ends, over rich under-curtains of lace. Under the gilt and bronze chandelier of twelve burners is a large circular table, carried back in history a hundred and seventy years. Its rich inlay of brass has not hindered vandals from chipping the edge for relics; a process now rendered difficult by a crimson and gilt spread. A few reception chairs are in old-gold and crimson. A grand piano, sheathed in Nile-green plush, stands against the west wall, and behind it is a handsome table of inlaid mahogany. On the mantel scarf of plush, straight with draped ends, are Sevres vases, 30 inches high, a Belisarius and a blind Homer on a dark ground, and a clock and side ornaments of ormolu, while a pair of superb Chinese vases, four feet high, guard either angle of the hearth.

Then there is a tall cabinet, six feet in height, near the west window, of carved mahogany, filled with falence, and another on the north side, three feet and a half high, and a Japanese screen a foot higher, with storks and bamboo stalks; gold on a ground of dark green plush. An ebony sofa, covered with Turkish stuff of crimson and gilt, and a pile of Turkish cushions, old-gold, crimson and green, complete the furnishings of the room. They were selected by Mrs. Garfield while the President lay in mortal illness, with the exception of the "cabinets, which exhibit the taste of Mr. Arthur.

On the west wall, where the eye first rests upon entering from the East Room, hangs the full-length portrait of Mrs. Hayes, by Huntington, taken in a robe of maroon velvet. This painting, it will be remembered, was made at the order of the W. C. T. U. during the administration of Mr. Hayes. The only other paintings in the room are

on the north wall, on either side of the door leading into the corridor. These are the half-length portraits of Mrs. Tyler, taken just after she became the wife of the President of that name while he occupied the Executive Mansion, and that of Mrs. Polk, presented to the Executive Mansion by the ladies of Nashville, Tenn.

Opposite the entrance of the Executive Mansion, and also the central door in the screen dividing the vestibule from the corridor, we enter the noted Blue Room. Here the President receives foreign ministers accredited to the United States, and presented for the first time. Here, also, are held the public receptions of the President, which occur semi-weekly during the sessions of Congress. At present Miss Cleveland does not receive with the President, but holds her own Saturday afternoons in the Red Room on the right. These three drawing-rooms, the Green, the Blue and the Red, are connected with each other and with the corridor, and also directly with the East Room by the large doors between that and the corridor. On all state occasions these doors are thrown open, making a brilliant suite, through which guests promenade at will, or pass in visiting the conservatory at the west extremity of the corridor, which leads, through the private staircase, to the second story of the mansion and the sleeping rooms of the family of the President. Under full gaslight, the visitor who stands in the middle of the corridor sees a noble vista on either hand, terminating at one end by the triple window of the East Room; at the other, by the tropical alleys of the conservatory, in which the choicest floral treasures find a congenial home. From their blossoming wealth the White House is profusely decorated on all public occasions. This vista is about 170 feet in length.

But we will return to the Blue Parlor, an apartment 40 feet deep by 30 wide, the longer diameter being from north to south. This room, like the library immediately above it, has been converted into an oval by rounding off the corner angles on the north end, and by the deep bay of the south center of the building.

The walls are deep robin's-egg blue, on which is superimposed a curious frieze, extending from the ceiling half way to the dado. These are oval and circular rings, two and one-half feet and eighteen inches in diameter, respectively, the latter broken into many geometric designs. They are in relief and tinted silver and bronze. The ceiling was first painted in parallelograms a foot and a half long, alternately a dull dark blue and a much lighter shade, with small raised rosettes in silver (aluminum) at their intersections. These parallelograms are in turn crossed by interlacing oval silver rings in relief. Within the intersecting spaces are stenciled shields in brown and silver. The four ovals immediately surrounding the small bronze center-piece, measuring about two feet through their longest diameter, are silvered, without shields, and covered with arabesques of small silver cord. The cornice consists of four members, and the cove is light greenish gray, with small silver ornaments. The chandelier is gilt and crystal, with three tiers of burners, and there are four side candelabra, each with eight burners. These are set in discs of mosaic or jeweled glass, amber and blue, in silver, and are about thirty inches in diameter.

The woodwork of the room is all in blue, the door-casings having narrow silver lines. The dado, three and a half feet in height, is a bright, deep tint of the same color, which loses its harshness under gaslight. It is unpaneled, except under the windows, and finished at the top with a narrow molding, which, like the baseboard and the door-frames, deeper and duller still, is "deeply, darkly, desperately blue." The Axminster carpet of dull, yellowish blue, harmonizes with the other shades by artificial light, and is enlivened by small figures of various shades of amber.

The sofas, chairs and central divan have gilt frames, are untufted, and covered plainly in silk reps or plush of a light, dull grayish blue, much lower in tone than the walls. The three windows of the room, hung with the same fabric, are lined with amber satin; they have dados of blue-green plush and cornices heavily gilt, the central one surmounted with the eagle, which reappears over the mirrors. Curtain lambrequins of plush, fifteen inches deep, are straight, and finished with deep fringe. On the mantel, covered by a plain band of plush, with draped ends, stands an ormolu clock, valuable from its associations. Presented by the First Napoleon to General Lafayette, it was in turn given by him to General Washington, and has been in the White House for nearly a century. The side ornaments were made to match, but the gilt candelabra, four feet high, on either side the hearth, were given by General Patterson to General Jackson during the latter's administration as President.



EAST ROOM, WHITE HOUSE, DECORATED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF LOUIS C. TIFFANY. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY J. F. JARVIS.